# UNITY

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION

(Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Editor, 1880-1918)

John Haynes Holmes, *Editor in Chief*

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Francis Neilson | Louis L. Mann | Curtis W. Reese

## Tempted Radicals

*By* CLARENCE R. SKINNER

## The Story of My Experiments with Truth

*Part II, Chapter XXVIII. By* M. K. GANDHI

## A Symposium Review of "My Idea of God"

By

Edward Scribner Ames
Henry Sloane Coffin
Samuel McChord Crothers
John H. Dietrich
H. G. Enelow
Ralph Tyler Flewelling
Charles W. Harvey
Brown Landone
J. Gresham Machen
Douglas C. Macintosh
E. Y. Mullins

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## *Contents*

EDITORIAL— Page
Notes ..... 55
Tempted Radicals—CLARENCE R. SKINNER ..... 57
Jottings.—J. H. H. ..... 59
Editorial Correspondence: American Notes—SYDNEY STRONG ..... 59

ARTICLES—
The Story of My Experiments with Truth—Part II, Chapter XXVIII. Poona and Madras—M. K. GANDHI ..... 60

THE STUDY TABLE—
A Symposium Review of "My Idea of God"—
I. EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES ..... 61
II. HENRY SLOANE COFFIN ..... 61
III. SAMUEL MCCHORD CROTHERS ..... 62
IV. JOHN H. DIETRICH ..... 62
V. H. G. ENELOW ..... 62
VI. RALPH TYLER FLEWELLING ..... 63
VII. CHARLES W. HARVEY ..... 63
VIII. BROWN LANDONE, F. R. E. S. ..... 63
IX. J. GRESHAM MACHEN ..... 64
X. DOUGLAS C. MACINTOSH ..... 64
XI. E. Y. MULLINS ..... 66

POETRY—
Selected—*Wordsworth* ..... 55

CORRESPONDENCE—
Professor Nagarkar, of India—J. T. SUNDERLAND ..... 66
Caviar to the General!—BRENT DOW ALLINSON .. 67

THE FIELD—
International Fellowship of Reconciliation ..... 67

# UNITY

"HE HATH MADE OF ONE ALL NATIONS OF MEN"

VOLUME XCIX MONDAY, MARCH 28, 1927 NUMBER 4

". . . . I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things—"

—*Wordsworth*..

---

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for the European brethren to dwell together in unity. Yea, verily! Look at the Bessarabian affair, for example. Bessarabia belongs to Russia. Snatched away, however, by Roumania during the confusion of war and revolution, it has now been formally and finally allotted to Roumania by a four-power pact in which Mussolini's Italy is the central force. In payment for Italy's support, so we are told, Roumania turned over to Italian capitalists all the state-owned oil wells and has promised customs reforms favorable to Italy. In winning Italy, however, Roumania has lost the goodwill of Jugo-Slavia which sees in the cession of Bessarabia "a victory for Italy's anti-Jugo-Slavian policy." What the affair means, from this point of view, is a break-up of the Little Entente, and the formation of a new Balkan bloc (Bulgaria, Greece, Roumania) under the control of Italy. Against this bloc is the certain enmity of Jugo-Slavia, Czecho-Slovakia and Austria. To these is to be added Soviet Russia, for the Bolshevik government is outraged by the annexation of Bessarabia and refuses to give it recognition. It is an act, says the Moscow *Izvestia,* "openly unfriendly to Soviet Russia." The Bolsheviki issue no threats and reaffirm emphatically their policy of peace, but they declare that the cession of the territory in question is illegal, and that Bessarabia belongs to Russia just as it always has. Which means that, when the right time comes, the Soviets will assert their claims! Of course England is in the affair, though why, it might test the wisdom of the wisest man to tell. But all this, says a well-informed observer, is a triumph of Austen Chamberlain's pro-Italian policy in the Mediterranean. It's an interesting story—incidentally, so exactly like what was going on in Europe in the years before 1914, that we can almost hear the rumblings of the next war. Alliances, balances of power, ententes, Balkan crises, armaments, secret diplomacy, they're all on the job, and all working to the same great end of another smash-up. How can peace ever in the world come out of such a situation? The answer is simple. It can't!

---

The Supreme Court of the United States is passing down some great decisions these days—none greater than the unanimous decision, fittingly pronounced by Mr. Justice Holmes, which declared the Texas law denying to Negroes the right to vote in primary elections, to be invalid on the grounds of unconstitutionality. The specific issue in this case was the question as to whether state primaries are under the control of the federal government; the Court decided that they *are*. Back of this, however, was the whole question of limiting the franchise of Negroes. For years, now, the southern states have been passing all kinds of laws denying to Negro citizens the right to vote. It is obvious to anybody who knows enough to come in out of the rain that these laws are all, in one way or another, gross infringements of the 14th and 15th Amendments to the federal Constitution. But nothing seemed to be done about it, and a condition infinitely more scandalous than that of the present violation of the 18th Amendment everywhere prevailed south of Mason and Dixon's line. Then the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People got on the job. This organization started what seemed to be the hopeless task of breaking down the barriers of law which shut off the Negro population from the ballot-box. A few years ago the first great victory was won through a pronouncement of the Supreme Court that the so-called "grandfather" clauses of these southern disfranchisement statutes were unconstitutional. This was a body blow at the current violations of the 14th and 15th Amendments, for the "grandfather" device was popular and effective. Now comes this second victory which releases the primaries from all control of state or local authorities. It is a smashing triumph! Texas shouts loudly that she will pass another law modified to meet the decision of the Court. Perhaps! But mean-

while it is evident that we have in Washington a tribunal which thinks that the 14th and 15th Amendments to the Constitution mean what they say. The Negroes today, thoroughly aroused and ably led, can be counted upon to fight this battle step by step until everywhere throughout this nation the black man stands on an equal footing with the white man before that sacred instrument of democracy—the ballot box.

---

What is the responsibility of newspapers in the matter of the indecent theatre and its dirty plays? Most of our great newspapers today are very careful, for example, about their advertising. The very journals which are opposed to a censorship on plays exercise a most drastic censorship over their own advertising columns, and are supported by public opinion in so doing. No unclean "ad," no fraudulent "ad," this is the rule in all first-class newspaper offices! Yet these very offices accept and print theatre and "movie" advertisements which would make a tom-cat blush. For example, in one of the very best of our New York newspapers, a journal impeccable in taste, intelligence and serious purpose, there appeared on the first Sunday of Lent, in the advertising notices on the theatrical page, the following:

MAE WEST IN SEX!!
The Biggest Sensation Since the Armistice!

FOG!!
All for Love! What Happened?

CRIME!!
A Sensational and Revealing Drama of the New York Underworld!

SINNER!!

HER CARDBOARD LOVER!
DON'T MISS THIS!
What Anne Brought Home! Presented by Earl Carroll!

FLESH AND THE DEVIL!

STARK LOVE! HER MASTER OR HER LOVER!!
Primitive custom made her a slave to a rough master!

BUT HER HEART WAS WITH HER LOVER! And two men fought over her!! One the father, and the other his son! LIFE!! FIERCE AND UNASHAMED!

ARE PEARLS THE PRICE
OF BROKEN HEARTS?

LOVE'S GREATEST MISTAKE!
You Dog! Threaten Me, Will Ya? The Year's Greatest Melodrama!!

WHEN A MAN LOVES!!
What is this strange allure toward which thousands of girls are drifting? SHE'LL DANCE WITH YOU AT SO MUCH PER DANCE!!

THE NIGHT HAWK!!
(The rejuvenation of a woman of the streets)

Winter Garden Sunday Concert
All Star Cast

LALLY—A Symphony in Sex!!

THE SCARLET LILY!
Restless Women! Closed Doors!
Three Hours!

We soil UNITY'S pages in printing such stuff as this. It sounds like the worst of the tabloids. Yet a newspaper of the highest class, which we do not name because we are using it only as a chance illustration of what every newspaper is doing today, sold perfectly good space at a high price for the display of garbage of this description. We know what we think about theatres that revel in dirt. Do we know what we think, or ought to think, about newspapers that serve as publicity agents for these theatres?

---

Columbia University in New York is a great center of educational light and leading. Certainly it is the latter. How much educational light it actually dispenses will perhaps be determined only after our civilization has moved on to such a distance as adequately to test the voltage of its beams. The celebration of President Butler's 25th anniversary is the occasion of review and comment. Numbers and money talk loudest in the newspapers and in other popular reckonings. They seem also to fill the eye of the directors of Columbia. It is truly marvelous what has transpired at this one seat of learning during the past quarter of a century. A student enrollment of 4400 has become 40,000. An annual budget of a million has swelled to one of eleven and a half millions. And the greater marvel is that what has been happening at Columbia has been duplicated at other educational centers all over the country, not in actual totals but in relative increases. Even those who scorn Upton Sinclair's "Goose Step" and its diatribes will still shake their heads in question of the meaning of all this. A thrilling re-assurance at Columbia is her outstanding leadership in educational method and ideal. John Dewey and his philosophy have dominated this movement. It has been asserted that one teacher in six of the nation's school system has attended Columbia for a longer or shorter period. This multitude of the nation's educators have been brought to the bar of ideals which shame the actual educational method which prevails in schools all over the country. It is perhaps too early to estimate what will be the total reaction. Though the break-up of the old order is slow, the Dewey educational philosophy is spreading and winning. It will not allow tests to dwell finally upon numbers and money. So the hopeful may be assured that Columbia has been and is better than President Butler. He is esteemed an efficient administrator. But in respect of much of the best progress at Columbia the historian will record that he was also present.

---

All should welcome the discussion of educational ideal and method which the "rebellious" undergraduates of Princeton have precipitated. There are really two issues involved which should be kept separate. The first, whether, a highly emotional religionism shall prevail in a modern university, can scarcely be called

a vital question. It may serve to generate a little tempest in a small academic teapot, but for the most of our universities that issue has been settled. The other quite separate issue at Princeton is how far the undergraduate personnel is to dominate the university community life. Is it right and reasonable that a procession of young fellows, upon whom are expended annually fabulous sums of money which they do nothing to produce, shall demand the control of the machinery through which these sums are expended? Of course nobody states the issue quite in those terms. But money does the final talking. Trustees and faculty are custodians of vested interests. The young fellows who voted for more general student control of the university life are not greedy financiers seeking to grab the millions invested at Princeton. Money probably enters only slightly into their calculations—especially if Dad's checks continue to come on with business-like regularity! They are rebelling against the superficial frets and naggings of a system which is fundamentally inconsistent with the "democratic" demands which they thrust forward. They show a commendable ambition to assert the rights of free men. They are not so emphatic in recognition of the duties of freemen. Having yielded to an educational system which is economically pampering, they would evade the spiritual consequences. Money, property controls at Princeton, as at the other universities. The prevailing scholastic system requires that it do so. Are the Princeton undergraduates seriously disposed to challenge that system? That is the question.

---

Our beloved editorial colleague, Dr. Sydney Strong, whose "American Notes" are perused so eagerly and appreciatively by our readers, made an observation some weeks ago which seemed to us to go nearer to the heart of the social situation here in America than anything that we had seen in months. We refer to it again because it has stuck so persistently in our mind. Dr. Strong was speaking of our colleges, and he commented shrewdly upon the fact that more and more, in these higher institutions of learning, compulsory military training was taking the place of compulsory chapel! A more detailed examination of what is going on would show that the tendency to abolish compulsory chapel is running strong. What the late President Eliot, of Harvard, started two generations ago, in the face of bitter and alarmed opposition, is now becoming a commonplace in our colleges and universities. The reason for the reform, of course, is objection to the compulsory feature of chapel attendance. That is, we assume it is! We cannot imagine that our college authorities are objecting to chapel—to religious exercises for students and faculty. They believe in religion as much as ever, only it must be free. Compulsion involves tyranny, degradation of personality, the defect of true education. *But,* at this same time when compulsory chapel is disappearing, compulsory military training is coming in! Why, we ask, is compulsion any better, any less harmful, in this case than in the other? What magic is there in military training that makes it necessary, while religion may be regarded as unnecessary, or voluntary? If there must be obedience, why not to God instead of to a drill-sergeant? For ourselves, we know of nothing more sinister and hence significant than this two-fold development in the college life of our time. If we seek evidence of the militarization of the American people, here it is!

---

## Tempted Radicals

There have been three distinct stages of radicalism in the United States during the first quarter of the Twentieth Century. Each of these phases has had an important effect upon the character and direction of radical activities and by indirection has affected the nature of the whole body politic.

The first stage in the early days of our century was marked by a slow sentimental and heroic attempt to introduce a revolutionary doctrine into an industrially conservative and politically provincial people. The movement was slow because American conditions made for inertia; it was sentimental because it was largely doctrinaire; it was heroic in proportion to its hopelessness in the face of tremendous odds.

The second phase was the period of the war and was marked by expectancy, greater realism, and rapid growth. Suddenly this country was thrown into the currents of European thought, and the wall of its provincialism began to crumble. Radicalism came in at the breaches. It also compelled some people to make a thorough-going analysis and valuation of the fundamental relations between men, and it revealed to large numbers the essential unsoundness of many of our conventions and institutions. The disintegration of the old order was far more dramatic and sudden than had been predicted, all of which gave stimulus to hope. And the immediacy of hope gave realism to the doctrine. When opportunity is immediate, men must search for the concrete and workable methods for applying their dreams.

This was a period of excitement and strenuous radicalism. Converts were made in large numbers, people thought and worked harder than ever before in their lives and every day brought challenge.

Then bubbles burst (there were some bubbles), conservatives won the day by swinging this country

back to the old order. We made a patch-work peace, we hunted and hounded foreigners and radicals, disillusion followed, and there ensued the period of the "tired radical";—men who were tired physically; more tired emotionally; and most of all tired of facing an apparently hopeless task of reconstructing a world which seemed addicted to the perverse habit of sliding along the grooves of least resistance.

Thus ended the third phase of radicalism and with it ended many a radical.

But there has been ample time for radicals to recuperate from their fatigue. The fact that many have not suggests the possibility that we are entering a fourth stage of the movement which might be called the period of tempted radicals.

The temptations which confront the radical at the present time are twofold.

First, there is the temptation which has lured many men in the past away from the path of thorough going criticism, namely, comfort, money and success. Old governments and old church organizations have been wise enough, or shall we say cunning enough to tempt their minorities with these dangerous baits. "The lean and hungry Cassius" can be fattened, and in his ponderous state is less apt to be a revolutionary. Bread and the circus have lulled many minds to the acceptance of things as they are. When an agitator grows dangerous give him a good job and he may soon become a violent oppressor of agitation.

In the old days when priests found that "there was something rotten in Denmark" they were made bishops or cardinals and given a fat living in a town far removed from the site of disturbance. A good cellar stocked with sufficient wine, a sense of power, plenty of flattery and the restless keen mind dulled, and the radical died in giving birth to contentment.

The temptation which faces the modern agitator or critic of the social order is not an exact parallel to that of ancient time, and is therefore of more danger because it is unprecedented. Luxury, unknown and undreamed of in the whole history of man is the new silencer, which may prevent the oratorical shot from being heard round the world. Automobiles, stock-speculation, Florida real estate booms, get-rich-quick schemes,—these are some of the dangers which confront the thorough-going critic of the times. He may be so over-stimulated in his acquisitive instinct, and he may be drawn so unconsciously into the struggle for things that his thought may become channelized from fundamental human considerations, and end with the inanities of cheap possessions. Automobiles are in themselves as harmless as railroads or buggy wagons, but when thinking about automobiles becomes a dominant passion as it has with innumerable people, then they have done inestimable harm to the human spirit.

So with wealth whether it be represented in stocks or in real estate, wealth we must always have in the form of commodities to meet the necessary wants of men, but when speculation in the rise and fall of the money index of these wants becomes prevalent and absorbing, again it has done irreparable harm to the mind of man.

The prosperity of America today is one of its gravest dangers. Prosperity almost surely means the thing-izing of thought, the surrender of the eternal protest, the descent into the depths of hopeless satisfaction, and the radical is not immune to these dangers. Thousands of him have been engulfed. They have capitulated not to danger, not to fear, but to too much prosperity. And it is obvious that in the midst of such a world as ours we need the prophet to stir our consciences and keep alive a keen sense of relative values. Better by far for our individual souls that we have less fat on our bones and more of the unquenchable fire in our hearts.

And finally a temptation which presses upon many a radical is that of believing that our present prosperity is the result of a new social system and that therefore the function of radicalism is gone. This conclusion is untrue in the first place because there is still a far greater amount of unemployment, individual wretchedness, preventable disease, ignorance and poverty than most people realize. Not 'till the crosses of unwilling sacrifice are lifted can radicals be content to "curl up by the world's warm fire."

The peace, content, and business prosperity which does appear in so many parts of the United States does not rest upon a fundamentally new ordering of human relationships. It rests upon a "concomitant of circumstances" which might at any moment disappear. And there would follow the old train of bitterness, strife, and hatred. The task of reconstructing our economic life has not been accomplished. We have not yet worked out a new system of international relations. Steps are perhaps being made in both these directions, but let not the radical be lulled to sleep by an immediate pause in the turmoil.

Will the radical awake or be tempted to buy a Buick? The world still needs him, our souls are not saved yet, even though Coolidge may reduce the tax-rate next year.

CLARENCE R. SKINNER.

## Jottings

We have read funny things in our time, but we recall nothing funnier than this:

The President of the United States puts on a smock-frock when he goes to the milking (on his Vermont farm), or *jocund drives his team afield*, only to find that a man with a moving picture camera is there before him.

The thought of Calvin Coolidge as "jocund" knocks us flat!

---

The recent decision of the Supreme Court making null and void the Texas primary law barring Negroes from the franchise is certain to have important bearings on the Smith and Vare senatorial contests. Here is highest judicial authority for the right of the nation to control the primary elections in which in both these cases the corruption is charged.

---

Soviet Russia is accused of the monstrous offense of selling to Germany guns and ammunition which are used to shoot down rebellious "Reds." But this is nothing new! In England today can be seen cannons captured from Germany in the Great War, which bear the trade marks of British manufacturers. Arms and munition makers are our true internationalists.

The "wets" in New York, as organized in the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment have refused to support the idea of calling a Constitutional Convention to repeal the Amendment. Of course! They know perfectly well, though they do not say so, that any such nation-wide convention would nail down the Amendment more firmly than ever. No way out there!

---

The Chicago boy who was kept alive 108 hours by the artificial respiration induced by his mates, reminds us of the Nicaraguan government of Diaz kept alive day after day by the artificial respiration induced by U. S. marines. We wonder will collapse come as certainly in the latter case as in the former.

---

What's in a name? Well, when you discover that the Chairman of the National Security League and the Editor of the *American Mercury* have the same name, there can't be much!

J. H. H.

---

## American Notes

[Editorial Correspondence]

My readers all know Frederick Starr and Norman Thomas. I heard them both speak yesterday, one at Abraham Lincoln Center, the other before a group of theological students, in Meadville House, at the University. Dr. Starr spoke on "The Isles of Fear"—the Philippines—the other on "Is human nature hopeless?"

Dr. Starr, of course, is hot in his support of Philippine Independence. And yet he is not very hopeful of its being secured. He declared that America was guilty of practically every brutality charged upon Spain, and given as reasons for driving Spain out of Cuba and the Philippines, and he puts his finger on the line and letter. Every added year that independence is withheld, the less fit for it do the Filipinos become. And it is "rubber" that is preventing America from keeping its solemn promise given before the world, to grant the people of those islands their freedom. This economic factor forms the back-ground for all the propaganda and misrepresentation put out in press, and in books. It is a pathetic sight—seeing a man like Dr. Starr, scholar, patriot—by inheritance and devotion to American principles—eloquent, rational, case clearly proven—standing before the American people and pointing out the path of justice and decency,—with the people apparently drifting into playing the role of dictator and exploiter. And we ask: Must Socrates always be unheeded? Will not some one ring the Liberty Bell, and sing out, "Wake up, America?"

And Norman Thomas is one of the ablest men of the middle generation. It was a parlor meeting. He did well, but he would do better if in a large hall, for he is a man of assemblies. If I had my way, I would hire halls and bands and square inches in the press, for advertising, and send him out to tour the land, to speak against war. As it was he went carefully over the argument to show that human nature was not hopeless—something of a class-room atmosphere—and he did it well, very well—so as to make all think how well it was done; but he would have done better, had he had room to swing his arms—and starting with the assumption that human nature was not only hopeful, but full of glorious possibilities—which every normal man really believes—and lift up his voice to call people to repentance for their sins of violence and theft, and to declare that from henceforth, they would have no more to do with the vile practice and the crime of war. Norman Thomas would make a great evangelist—he is one already—I only wish he could get at the people. How eloquently he could call men to the great adventure of building a social order—which Jesus named the "kingdom of God."

We need not lose hope in humanity, so long as we have prophets of truth, like Frederick Starr and Norman Thomas. And I heard them both in one day, within a mile of each other.

And you would have enjoyed hearing Dr. Starr last Sunday speaking before the Chicago Forum, in Erlanger Theatre.

His topic was China. It is the best talk I have heard on China. Right up to date. He spent there the last six months of 1926. The Orient is as familiar to him—from Manila to Yokohama—as are the streets to a conductor of a street car. He brought out several striking facts, such as, in 1914 the Chinese possessed only 21 per cent of the territory of China. When Japan made her 21 demands that startled the world with their aspect of greed, who heard that Britain made similar demands of China, in Thibet? There was no reason for

China to enter the War. It was done at the special solicitation of the United States. At that time China was promised that after the War, she would get justice done her. China was defrauded at the Peace table of Versailles. The Washington Arms conference was a bunko-game, in which China was defrauded. The present uprising is a different thing from the Boxer uprising. It is led by the best men in China. England is showing more sense than America in dealing with the situation. She senses the truth and is showing a willingness to back out. America has been in great favor in China, but two things are raising a doubt in the Chinese mind: one, is the habit of American diplomats to fall in behind the British. The second is seen in the imperialism that appears in America's treatment of the Filipinos, in their desires for independence.

Dr. Starr held us throughout up to the close when he said there are three ways out. 1—"Get back to normalcy," to the old days. This would mean force, applied stoutly by the outside nations. It would bring on a war that would destroy "Western civilization." 2—To Westernize China. This would be a menace, to the West even more than to the East. 3—China to be allowed to pursue her own way, with the other nations living with her in friendship, while she develops. "If the West were wise—and for this state of mind one can only hope—the third path will be the one taken."

*Chicago, Ill.* SYDNEY STRONG.

---

# The Story of My Experiments with Truth

[The Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi]

(Copyrighted, 1927)

PART II—CHAPTER XXVIII

## Poona and Madras

Sir Pherozeshah had made my way easy. So from Bombay I went to Poona. Here there were two parties. I wanted the help of people of every shade of opinion. First I met Lokamanya Tilak. He said:

You are quite right in seeking the help of all parties. There can be no difference of opinion on the South African question. But you must have a non-party man for your president. Meet Professor Bhandarker. He has been taking no part of late in any public activity. But this question might possibly draw him out. See him and let me know what he says. I want to help you to the fullest extent. Of course you will meet me whenever you like. I am at your disposal.

This was my first meeting with the Lokamanya. It was enough to explain his unique popularity.

Next I met Gokhale. I found him on the Fergusson College ground. He gave me a cordial welcome and his manner immediately captured me. With him too this was my first meeting and yet it seemed as though we were renewing an old friendship. Sir Pherozeshah had seemed to me like the Himalaya, the Lokamanya like the ocean. But Gokhale was as the Ganges. One could have a refreshing bath in the holy river. The Himalaya was unscalable, and one could not easily launch forth on the sea. But the Ganges invited me to its bosom, it was a joy to be on it with a boat and an oar. Gokhale closely examined me, as a schoolmaster would examine a candidate seeking admission to a school. He told me whom to approach and how to approach them. He asked to have a look at my speech. He showed me over the college, assured me that he was always at my disposal, asked me to let him know the result of the interview with Dr. Bhandarkar and sent me away exultantly happy. In the sphere of politics the place that Gokhale occupied in my heart during his life-time and occupies even now has been and is absolutely unique.

Dr. Bhandarkar received me with the warmth of a father. It was noon when I called on him. The very fact that I was busy seeing people at that hour appealed greatly to this indefatigable savant, and my insistence on a non-party man for the president of the meeting had his ready approval which was expressed in the spontaneous exclamation, "That's it!" "That's it!"

After he had heard me out he said:

Any one will tell you that I do not take part in politics. But I cannot refuse you. Your case is so strong and your industry is so admirable that I cannot decline to take part in your meeting. You did well in consulting with Tilak and Gokhale. Please tell them that I shall be glad to preside over the meeting to be held under the joint auspices of the two Sabhas. You need not have the time of the meeting from me. Any time that suits them will suit me.

With this he bade me goodbye with congratulations and blessings.

Without any ado this erudite and selfless band of workers in Poona held a meeting in an unostentatious little place and sent me away rejoicing and more confident of my mission.

I next proceeded to Madras. It was wild with enthusiasm. Balasundaram's incident made a profound impression on the meeting. My speech was printed and was, for me, fairly long. But the audience listened to every word with attention. At the close of the meeting there was a regular run on the "Green Pamphlet." I brought out a second and revised edition of 10,000 copies. They sold like hot cakes, but I saw that it was not necessary to have printed such a large number. In my enthusiasm I had over-calculated the demand. It was the English-speaking public to which my speech had been addressed, and in Madras that class alone could not have taken the whole ten thousand copies.

The greatest help there came to me from the late Mr. G. Parameswaran Pillay, the editor of the *Madras Standard*. He had made a careful study of the question and he often invited me to his office and guided me. Mr. G. Subramaniam of the *Hindu* and Dr. Subramaniam also were very sympathetic. But Mr. G. Parameshwaran Pillay placed the columns of the *Madras Standard* entirely at my disposal, and I freely availed myself of the offer. The meeting, in Pachaiappa Hall, so far as I can recollect, was with Dr. Subramaniam in the chair.

The affection that most of the friends I met showered on me, and their enthusiasm for the cause were so great that in spite of my having to communicate with them in English I felt myself entirely at home. What barrier is there that love cannot break?

M. K. GANDHI.

(*Translated from Navajivan by Mahadeo Desai.*)

# The Study Table

## A Symposium Review of "My Idea of God"

### Introduction

Some months ago, Dr. Joseph Fort Newton published a symposium* on present-day ideas of God which proved to be a most representative expression of contemporary theism. Eighteen contributors made statements of their faith, to which was added a valuable "foreword" from the pen of the editor. These contributors included all phases of contemporary opinion—Jew and Christian, orthodox and liberal, Fundamentalist and Modernist, even Humanist, which is not recognized by some believers as theistic at all. A single layman, scientifically trained, was added for full measure.

It occurred to us that no better review of this book could be written than by the contributors themselves. We therefore invited these contributors to send their opinions of the symposium of which their own thought and faith were a part. The following replies were received. We wish to thank these generous friends who, out of busy lives, took time to cooperate with us in the carrying out of our plan.—Editors.

### I

I have read every word of this book, "My Idea of God," and have found it to be of absorbing interest. It is the most striking cross-section of theological thought in this country to be found within the covers of a single volume. There are several things which make it important.

All the writers express themselves with evident freedom and frankness. The reader scarcely ever gets the impression, unfortunately too characteristic of writing on such subjects, that the authors are glancing around between sentences to see how the words may impress some ecclesiastical overlord or some popular cloud of witnesses. Each one examines his own mind and heart and tries to express what he really thinks and feels.

The book shows a very great diversity of points of view and of divergence from traditional orthodoxy. Many readers will probably be shocked to read statements from representative ministers and teachers which are often tentative and undogmatic where formerly nothing was heard from such sources except emphatic affirmation and acceptance. It is noticeable, however, that in the essays which have fewest of the conventional phrases, there is yet a genuine religious faith and fervor.

It would be difficult to cite a similar amount of theological discussion from the same number of writers which would give better evidence that men are actually applying the scientific temper and method, to religious problems. The old deductive procedure is not much in evidence. The familiar "proofs" are seldom referred to and several clearly state that they do not conceive their positions to be susceptible of demonstration. These are empirical findings, resting for the most part upon experiences within the reach of all.

To several of the writers the idea of God lies in the field of metaphor, of poetry and of art, but is not on that account less but more valuable. It is therefore a growing idea and of sufficient flexibility to incorporate new social and scientific developments. There is doubtless a very close connection between this free rereading of the idea of God and the influence of the conception of evolution, of biblical, historical criticism, and of the new social, humanitarian idealism.

Nothing could be more heartening in the face of the increasing need for a reasonable and appealing religious faith than this series of thoughtful, uncontroversial, and passionately sincere confessions.

EDWARD SCRIBNER AMES.

*University of Chicago.*

### II

It is difficult to appraise the significance of such a volume, for its contributors have been selected by the editor because they represent various points of view, and not because their views are representative of groups of similar numerical strength. One contributor may voice the belief of a host, while another may have a negligible following. The volume is interesting and readable because those who have written for it have so patently tried to give their honest opinions.

The articles fall into two main categories—confessions of faith in a living God with whom men are aware of possessing personal relations, and confessions of faith in some substitute—a personification of the ideals of humanity. The latter are not novel, for they have had ancestors throughout the centuries, but they have not been the conceptions of the vitally and fruitfully religious in the past, and they deserve particular attention because unhappily, for a variety of causes, they seem the nearest approach to Theistic faith reached by many wistful spirits among educated folk today. A University professor, familiar with both the physical sciences and psychology, remarked recently that there were two conceptions of Deity, one of which attributed to God substantial reality. This seemed to him satisfactory but untenable. The other assigned to God only ideal existence, and was unsatisfactory, but provided some basis and stimulus for the good life.

For myself I cannot believe that our needs are not keys to fact. We need a real God, not a fancy projected by our minds upon the skyline. Only on the conviction of such an actual God can one confidently look forward to an ideal society on earth and an eternal beloved commonwealth. If both these hopes have to be abandoned, mankind is in a wretched plight. No "Alma Mater" of collective sentiment, no "Uncle Sam" of group loyalty, no "Santa Claus" of general goodwill, is a sufficient substitute. We are left without God and without hope, and although we may continue to be decent and do our best as a race until our planet runs its course and becomes too cold for human habitation, we shall continue dispiritedly, and quite likely the mass of men may sink to brutal levels. A very good case may be made out for "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"

Personally I rest upon Jesus of Nazareth. The God in whom He trusted enabled Him to be what I cannot help wishing that I and all men may approximate. I cannot bring myself to believe that this Life of lives was based on an illusion. In the supreme crisis of His death, when He staked everything on the existence of such a Father, the universe, so often thought to be unresponsive, vindicated His faith. His foes had resolved to rid the earth of His presence; but, however

*"My Idea of God," edited by Joseph Fort Newton. Published by Little, Brown & Co., Boston.

one accounts for the process, He rose and abides a living factor in the world today, our most influential Contemporary. The God whom Jesus trusted has approved Himself faithful.

And ten thousand times ten thousand who, following Jesus, have drawn on like spiritual Comradeship, do not avouch themselves disappointed. They have found in the seemingly indifferent universe a response to their purposes. "They looked unto Him and were radiant!"

> And all their minds transfigured so together
> More witnesseth than fancy's images,
> And grows to something of great constancy.

HENRY SLOANE COFFIN.

*Union Theological Seminary.*

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III

To your question as to whether the symposium on "My Idea of God" indicates that "old ideas are giving way to new and revolutionary ideas?" I think it is impossible to give a categorical answer.

There has always been a wide difference between the ideas which were received on authority, and those which were the result of personal thought. Jonathan Edwards, for example, when he presents his own thought of God has little in common with the dogmatist who drew his conceptions from texts of Scripture. God to Edwards the philosopher is "Being in General" and is not to be defined as we would define a particular individual. God is to be loved as we love Beauty.

What I see in this symposium is that there is a tendency to speak of something confessedly beyond us all, in the language of the great mystics rather than in the language of dogmatic theologians.

We have now gone beyond the thought of "The Wisdom of Solomon" of that divine wisdom "manifold, subtle, lively, clear, undefiled, plain, not subject to hurt, loving the thing that is good, quick, which cannot be hindered, ready to do good, free from care." There is something "more moving than any motion, going through all things."

This power "in all ages entering into holy souls maketh them friends of God and prophets."

This approach to the thought of God is not new, but it has not been—and is not now—characteristic of popular religion.

SAMUEL MCCHORD CROTHERS.

*Unitarian Church, Cambridge, Mass.*

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IV

You ask for my opinion of the symposium on "My Idea of God"? In short it is this—what strange and unusual forms the idea of God assumes in the minds of different people, and in most cases how vague and unreal he has become! Surely if any one has lost his belief in God, he should be able to find it here, whether he be Fundamentalist or Agnostic, Christian Scientist or Jew, Swedenborgian or Quaker. And the different conceptions in the book show how truly individual this idea of God is—individual, I mean, in the sense that each person has his own peculiar idea of God. It is this that makes the term "God" a particularly dangerous one—a term that I never use in my public teaching. If one uses the term it naturally suggests to the hearer the conception of God which he holds, and this may be as different from that of the speaker as an individualized, masculine, monarchical, heavenly Father is different from an inherent moral urge or an imaginary idealized humanity. Then too I find very little use for the term, because, no matter what it may signify, there is usually a word that expresses the idea more clearly. For instance, if God means to one "the totality of being" or "the moral ideal," why not use these words and avoid all misunderstanding?

Ordinarily, I think, God is merely a term used to explain what we do not understand, and is therefore synonymous with the Unknown. We explain everything we can by natural causes, and then take refuge in the idea of God. And so in a philosophical sense it is quite possible that if we knew all, we would have no need of an idea of God. And this probably explains why in this modern time with our great expansion of knowledge the idea of God is rapidly fading. However, I think there is a place for the idea from the standpoint of ethics. Whether or not religion is worth anything depends upon the kind of religion—that is, upon the object of our reverence and aspirations, and this object is usually summed up in the idea of God. So when I think of God at all, I think of the idea in its ethical significance. I can see here the benefit of the God-idea as it reacts upon the lives of men. Thus the all important question to my mind is not an intellectual, but an ethical conception of God. Philosophically it is not important whether a man believes in God or not; but if he does believe in God, it is of tremendous ethical significance as to what kind of a God he believes in. In short, it is not a question of God or no God, but rather the question of a good God or a bad God. And so we are impressed with the truth of what Ingersoll said, in paraphrasing the well-known line of Alexander Pope, "An honest God is the noblest work of man." The value of this book therefore depends upon how worthy the ideas presented are; and, well what are they worth? You have here everything from an individual person to an idealized humanity, from a definite object to a mental concept, from a just wrath to a perfect love, from a fixed standard to a struggling spirit; and I imagine that whichever helps a man most to realize all the possibilities of his life is the best for him. And if none of them are able to do this, then let him do what the rest of us have done, make one of his own.

JOHN H. DIETRICH.

*Unitarian Church, Minneapolis, Minn.*

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V

What such a volume as "My Idea of God" shows, I think, is the hold the God idea has upon the human mind. But a short time ago many thought that after the twilight of the gods had come the sunset of Deity. Even so-called religionists fancied they could dispense with God. Man became the measure of spirituality. Religion henceforward was to be anthropocentric, as the phrase had it, and the ethnologist was to replace the theologian.

That notion, however, has proved futile. Craving for God is as strong today as ever; perhaps more so. The more we have achieved in the material sphere, the more mastery we have gained in the realm of science, the more our eyes and our hearts turn toward God. Some of the foremost scientists today are among the most insistent searchers after the Divine, and its fervid champions, thus illustrating the truth of Francis Thompson's words: "Nothing shall content thee, that contents not Me." Modern man is repeating the experience of the ancient Jewish poet: "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?" Religion is returning to its primeval core—it is becoming again theocentric.

Moreover, the essays in this volume indicate the increasing unity of thought on the subject of God among members of various religious groups. Under modern conditions that is inevitable. Whatever divisive barriers may still exist in the world, our intellectual life is inclusive. There is no fence around the field of philosophy; no national or denominational walls about the grounds of science. All seekers of truth there meet together. Whoever today thinks or writes about God, cannot help being affected by the general thought of the age, if at all aware of it. Certainly we are approaching some degree of unanimity in thinking of God as a spiritual, creative, compassionate being. Perhaps it is the beginning of the day forecast by the ancient prophets, when God shall be one and His name one.

(Rabbi) H. G. Enelow.
*Temple Emanu-El, New York.*

VI

"To love mercy, to do justly, and to walk humbly with God" is the aim of every religion conceived in its highest and purest form. Regarding the desirability of such an order of living there is nowhere any doubt or dissension. On this principle, modernist and fundamentalist, Buddhist and Christian, Mohammedan and Jew, bond or free, saint and sinner, all can agree. The disagreements in religion are never over ethical ideals but over the philosophical statements and reasons for faith. Such being the case there is in reality a broad basis for agreement among religious men of perception and intelligence. There is every reason for their being united on matters of religion that are important. For this reason it was a fertile as well as a daring idea for Joseph Fort Newton to ask men of every type of religious thought to set forth their practical working theory of God under the general title "My Idea of God."

The startling result is that the work sets before us all the real unity of thought that exists behind our divisions. It discloses the thinness of the veil which separates really earnest religious people from each other. It discloses to the thoughtful Christian the sinfulness of getting up that "middle wall of partition" which it was Christ's purpose to break down. It makes plain the need for a new and sympathetic understanding between men who are truly religious. It shows something of the possibility of a religious unity which is now facing us. It raises the question how long an eager and thinking world with need for a practical ethic and love among men will permit itself to continue in the darkness of a scholastic quibble about points of theology which possess no greater interest for men than that of a smart dialectic. When earnest men face each other frankly they find a common human nature, a common basis of need, and a common desirable ethic, "To love mercy, to do justly and to walk humbly with God." Dr. Newton has done us a service by disclosing the common bonds of religious sympathy.

Ralph Tyler Flewelling.
*University of Southern California.*

VII

The Christian Church as a whole, and the Christian world, are alike indebted to Dr. Newton for his symposium "My Idea of God." This is an age which has lost its faith, many insist, adding that the Church has none to offer. It is a superficial criticism we know, made by those who will not admit that it is necessary to seek in order to find. If anything can prove the injustice of the criticism, it is Dr. Newton's book. Here, surely, any person who really desires it can find some form of faith that will help him.

There can be no Christian world or Christian life without faith. That which this symposium, in one or other of its articles, suggests or confirms, is necessary to all of us. Only faith, confidence in a beneficent Author and purpose of our being, can lift it above the debasing sordidness of merely material interests. And that faith, of life and experience, must gradually prove to us that we are sent here to grow in regard for one another at our best, and in understanding how to bring that best out into practice for the common good. In this idea, expressed or implied, all the essays, divergent as they are, unite. They show at least that life is meant to be human, that is, the field for this love and understanding of one another; so that, in spite of all the difficulties that the necessary freedom of the human mind puts in the way of the Creator in carrying out His beneficent will, He is still to be conceived as essentially, all-embracing love, wisdom and power, that is, in some sense Divinely Human, trying to share His perfections with us, trying to make us as like Himself as His own gift of freedom to man will allow.

Charles W. Harvey.
*First New Jerusalem Church, Philadelphia.*

VIII

As I now read "My Idea of God," I am impressed with the evidence that each contributor in the beginning of his chapter dressed up his idea of God as an impressive answer to Dr. Newton's question, just as our teachers used to train us to give correctly glib answers, to impress visiting members of the local school board. And, with possibly two exceptions, there is evidence that each of us forgot his trite *idea* before he had finished his chapter, and revealed his *heart ideal* of God.

For instance, Rabbi Enelow, first presents God as the "Spirit whose energy produced the world," but of whom "no definition can be given." And although he urges you to affirm God's existence, he advises you to "keep your intellect from trying to comprehend Him." Yet, at the close of his chapter, so close is God to Rabbi Enelow's heart, that "He becomes part of my life, and my life, my conduct, becomes part of Him"—all of which contrasts strangely with the idea that God is so separate from man, that man should not even try to comprehend Him.

So also, the Paulist Father, Reverend Conway, writes, that "God is Unchangeable Substance—ineffably exalted above everything that exists or can be conceived"; yet, the Catholic Father closes with "He is a just Father, a loving Person."

The liberal writers are not exceptions. Radical, Unitarian, or Personalist—each, although his idea is directly opposed to the All-Perfect God of Hebrew and Catholic, turns to the heart ideal before his chapter ends.

Dr. Holmes' God, who is "never at any time the master of his task" and who "never sees His purpose through to the end," becomes "a kinship so close and inevitable that God and man become as one." Dr. Dietrich's idea of God as the "Great Reality which is too abstract for the ordinary mind to grasp" (and if so, what help would He be?) becomes "God and man . . . sacrificing for the perfect end." Dr. Flewel-

ling's idea of an idealized rich relative becomes the "Great Companion along every way I am called to travel . . . I reach out my hand in the darkness and discover that I am holding the hand of God!"

There are, however, two exceptions—two contributors who seem to miss the great heart ideal.

Mr. Gilmore, Christian Scientist, does not seem to have played square with the rest of us. Each of us was asked to write his idea of God. Mr. Gilmore did not, although in his first paragraph he promised to do so. Instead, he wrote several pages of a Science and Health Concordance, in which, he first presents God, as "Love, Truth, Life, Spirit, Mind, Soul, Principle," and then gives these attributes the mark of authority by thirty references to Mrs. Eddy and to Christian Science, which confirm his sixteen references to the Sacred Scriptures, making it certain that the Bible should be accepted.

His nearest approach to the heart ideal is his last paragraph, and this would satisfy our hearts, *if* he had not told us that that which "Comforts the doubting heart . . . and . . . brings sweet accord and blessed peace" is something which embraces "nothing evil, temporal, or erroneous." And so, with his God-of-nothing-evil-or-erroneous, Mr. Gilmore misses the heart ideal, as does Mr. Crothers, whose God is "an idea that is essentially incommunicable."

With these exceptions, each of the other contributors—no matter how greatly his *idea* differs from that of the others—arrives at the same *heart ideal,* and what a difference between our *ideas* of what God is, and what we spiritually *feel God* to be! Dr. Mullins, Baptist, is more consistent than the rest of us. Throughout his chapter, he thinks of God as a loving sovereign who answers personal prayers—"the everlasting Father" who meets the "needs of His child." Dr. Jones, Quaker, at first grandly defines his idea of God as "The Ground and the Source of all that we can call mind or reason," but closes with "A Friend, a Father, a Lover of our Souls . . . as personal and loving as the Galilean Friend of Men." When *My-All-God* was written, I thought it consistent, but I was soul-compelled to abandon my idea of God, and turn to the God whose love is ever present. So also, Dr. Machen, Presbyterian, although he at first insists on the "primacy of the intellect," concludes that we should devote ourselves to God's gospel of love "to bring them (our fellowmen) into the warmth and joy of the household of faith." *Love, warmth, joy, household*—what a heart ideal! How different from the primacy of the intellect?

Dr. Holmes still initials God with a capital G, and arrives at kinship of God and man. Dr. Bridges, with his Ethical Culture idea of God as an infinite multiplicity of spirits, closes with "Underneath are the everlasting arms." The Swedenborgian ideal (Reverend Harvey) is the "Divinely Human"; and Dr. Ames' ideal is "the love of God."

To Dr. Coffin, whose chapter is perhaps the most helpful, the heart ideal is "a Contemporary, unveiling Himself to His children. The Baptist, Dr. MacIntosh, beginning with God as the "conserver of absolute values" (and of what use is that to the heart which is hungry for spiritual sustenance) ends with God as the "Ideal Companion of the inner life . . . as near to me as I am to myself . . . An ever-present Perfect Friend." The Methodist, Dr. McConnel, makes the heart ideal very vivid by his question—"If God could live a human life, what kind of a life would it be?" And Dr. Roberts of the American Church, beginning with an invisible $x$ for God, ends with—"For me, God, is Jesus writ large."

What differences in ideas of God! What *unity* in our heart ideals of Him—God as the loving Father, the Friend, the Contemporary, the Companion, who is with us every step of the way. It is not extraordinary that Catholic and Jew, Protestant and Quaker, Personalist and Christian Scientist, should willingly cooperate in writing "My Idea of God"—for each of us desires to present his own ideas. If we did not, we would not be engaged in the work of trying to lead others to accept the ideas in which we believe. To me, the *unity* of the heart ideals of God, is the true significance of the remarkable work Dr. Newton has done in bringing together the differing concepts of different religious leaders. And UNITY publishes the symposium.

BROWN LANDONE, F. R. E. S.

*Hackensack, N. J.*

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IX

Two great questions emerge in this series of essays. The first is the epistemological question—the question whether any view of God that the writer may present is intended to have universal and permanent validity as truth or is merely intended to be valid for the present because of its practical results. I am bound to say that this question seems to me to be the most important question of all. I cannot become very much interested in an idea of God which is presented merely as useful and not as true.

I do not indeed underestimate the uses of the imagination. Personification of entities that are not really persons undoubtedly has its place in human life. Even "Uncle Sam," to whom Professor Edward Scribner Ames appeals, has his value; and when one contemplates the cartoons of a Tenniel, one feels that "Britannia" too, though not a person, does stand for some fine thing in human life. It is, in general, a useful exercise to people our drab world sometimes with the majestic figures which genius has created, and to take refuge from the humdrum of everyday existence in a poetic and imaginative realm.

But such a gift is the possession only of the few, and can never lay claim to that universality of appeal which is proper to religion. Religion can never exist permanently in a world of conscious make-believe. Without reality it cannot live. It must be founded upon knowledge, or else it will disappear.

The second question concerns the actual content of the idea of God. With regard to this question also, we have in this volume abundant evidences of the religious retrogression of our day. Ideas of God which really are very old are here presented as new.

There is a general tendency to descend from the heights of theism to a view which even when not expressly pantheistic, as is the case with Mr. Brown Landone, is at least pantheizing in that it tends to break down (1) the transcendence of God as over against the universe and (2) the personal distinctness between God and His worshippers. There is a general tendency too, in many of the writers, to look askance at the metaphysical attributes of God. We must worship a God of love, it is said, not a God of power or a God of intellectual prowess. But surely such antitheses are false. We could hardly worship a God who has no

power, for without freedom—without the power to act—there could be no love. And we could hardly worship a stupid God, no matter how loving he might be. God must have both power and intellectual prowess if He is to be truly a God of love.

The true wonder of the Christian conception is found in the union of the metaphysical with the moral attributes of God. It is not some puny finite God, not some product of a modern dualistic mythology, but the Dweller in the abyss of infinity, the Object of a boundless wonder, the awful Source of all being, the One who is Himself the ultimate mystery—it is such an One who has loved sinful man. "So the All-great were the All-loving too."—not some lesser person but the All-great. "The heart *of the Eternal* is most wonderfully kind." There is found the true glory of the Christian religion.

I am not without appreciation of the essays in this volume—even of those with which I most sharply disagree. I have read with the deepest interest, for example, such an absorbing and nobly expressed account of personal experience as is found in the paper of Mr. Horace J. Bridges; I have some understanding of the considerations which have led Dr. John Haynes Holmes to avoid the mysteries of theism by the notion of a finite God. But the solutions proposed, in these papers and in many of the others, either avoid the ultimate and really important questions, or else raise more difficulties than they solve. I still cherish the hope that our modern world, dissatisfied with the gloom of a pragmatist skepticism, may return some day to the living and holy God. That God is no mere abstraction, no mere collected name either of humanity or of the totality of the world, but a Person whom a man can love.

J. Gresham Machen.

*Princeton University.*

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X

Of the eighteen contributions to Dr. Newton's symposium, "My Idea of God," about two-thirds seem to me to retain the greater part, if not in every case all, of what is most essential in our traditional monotheistic faith. Three or four of the most conservative contributors, however, seem not to have taken seriously enough the modern problems of the philosophy of religion, and as a consequence their traditional conceptions have not been enriched as they might otherwise have been by the achievements of recent science and philosophy. Neither do they succeed in presenting the idea of God in the way in which it makes its strongest appeal to the modern mind. Along with the husks of outgrown tradition they have retained intact, but in a somewhat dessicated condition, the kernel of ethical monotheism. It is a problem as to whether this dessicated kernel has vitality enough to grow and reproduce itself in the soil of the world and mind of today.

Two or three of the writers fail to recognize adequately the interest practical religion has in making a distinction between the totality of reality, good, bad and indifferent, and God as a dependable Factor working against opposition for the realization of the highest ideals. We have a religious interest in Reality as a whole, but the practical religious interest is quite specific, and it has a very specific religious Object, namely, a Factor, transcending all humanity, upon which the conservation of human values ultimately depends. In its higher development this practical religious interest tends to affirm that its Object is Spirit, transcendent and also immanent in nature and humanity, but not in such a way as to be identified with the universe, as in pantheism, nor yet, after the manner of Christian Scientists and extreme mystics, in such a way as to maintain that in reality nothing but God can exist. The tendency toward an extreme monism is not an altogether new thing, even in occidental religion; but there is little reason to think it will gain much headway with us, so long as our religious interest remains fundamentally practical and ethical.

A few of the contributors do, however, represent sufficiently novel developments, especially as occurring within the bounds of institutional religion, to call for special comment. Most conspicuous of all in this connection is the "humanistic" conception presented by Messrs. Ames and Dietrich, according to which our idea of God as a superhuman moral and intelligent Being is interpreted as a mere poetic symbol, having no reality corresponding to it beyond the natural world of physical objects and events and human persons. Of course in its essentials this point of view is as old as atheism, but it has been reserved for our own generation to witness the spectacle of an anti-theism, which in at least one instance has dared to advertise itself as atheism, proclaiming itself from the pulpits of churches which still bear the Christian name. Religiously considered, this anti-theistic "Humanism" is essentially identical with the positivism of Comte, and is a mark of the wide influence of the arch-positivist of our time, Professor John Dewey. In the present writer's opinion this novel development is, to use a biological analogy, a "sport" which will prove to be so ill-adapted to meet the religious needs of humanity as to have no ultimate survival-value, particularly within the limits of the Christian communion. Its religious inadequacy is seen above all in two circumstances. First, no provision is made for the conservation of ideal values beyond what can be accomplished by man as a finite being. We are left ultimately at the mercy of the physical forces of the natural world. Pessimism is the only logical conclusion for those who have the courage to think the position through to the bitter end. In the second place, the new Humanism strikes a fatal blow at prayer, the heart of religion. Prayer, as an inner adjustment of the human soul to God as a universally accessible and responding superhuman Factor, has been the life of historical religion, and in its highest form it leads to a spiritual experience in which some of the most essential elements of theistic faith receive what may be regarded as a genuine progressive verification; and any teaching which makes this vital prayer-attitude logically incompatible with consistent thinking is the enemy of religion. There are ministers of religion who are deeply troubled because they have fallen into perplexity and doubt, and who are for the moment unable to make any confident assertion as to what God is or even to affirm that He is; such we can understand, and with them we can sympathize. But the new Humanist is not at all troubled about his lack of religious assurance. Not only is he self-satisfied; he is an active propagandist for his negative faith. So far from looking for help toward a theistic philosophy, he meets with scorn any attempts in that direction, and that not so much because of the arguments employed as because of the conclusion at which they claim to arrive. Seest thou a Humanist wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a Fundamentalist than of him.

Less extreme, but yet in our opinion unnecessarily negative and far from satisfactory, is the position of Mr. Holmes. Recognizing more definitely than the Humanists do the essentially cosmic nature of the God in which practical religion is interested, he nevertheless identifies the object of religious interest too exclusively with the immanent cause of cosmic change and creative evolution. His God is a cosmic Principle, fundamentally unknowable but apparently struggling toward some end, although more or less blindly and as yet very, very wastefully and ineffectively. The view seems to result from an unstable combination of pantheism, neo-vitalism, and agnosticism. Its God seems a rather pitiable Object, but almost negligible. In such a religious system the demands and needs which have been most characteristic of historical religion, even at its best, are left for the most part utterly unsatisfied.

But it is of little avail and only too easy to exclaim over the appearance of non-theistic and agnostic types of religion within the bounds of ecclesiastical communions to which, on the social-ethical side at least, we need not deny the name Christian. What is perhaps more to the point is to adopt a receptive attitude toward any valuable positive contributions these very one-sided developments may have to offer toward the religion of the future. Each of the views criticized stresses one important aspect of Deity. The spirit of any group, in so far as it is cooperating to realize ideal spiritual values, is, as the Humanists appreciate, truly divine. And no doctrine of the immanence of God in the natural and human world can be regarded as valid if it fails to recognize that the Cosmic Urge which has made for the creative evolution of new and higher forms of living beings, and which has culminated in the appearance and progress of the human race, has left to man, and very possibly to the lower forms of life as well, a certain measure of self-creative freedom. Ability to work toward divine ends through the freedom of finite beings—this is the aspect of Deity which the rather agnostic neo-vitalists have dimly recognized.

But these humanistic and vitalistic aspects of Deity are by no means the only ones concerning which we can have something to say, and to confine our religious life to the adjustments and relationships to which the meager insights of the new Humanism and an agnostic creative evolutionism by themselves would logically lead would mean an extreme impoverishment of religion, as compared with what is possible in Christion theism at its rational best.

DOUGLAS C. MACINTOSH.

*Yale University.*

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XI

Replying to your letter of November 3, I wish to give my views on the volume containing the symposium entitled "My Idea of God" as follows:

Of course there is great variety in the types of opinion set forth in this symposium, and no one of these types can be said to hold the field completely in modern thought. As I see it, the divergencies are due, first, to the individual idiosyncrasies and leanings of the writers. Secondly, to the somewhat vague and inconclusive mental attitude toward God and religion produced by modern science. There is nothing remarkable in the fact of this variety, and I presume such variety has always existed in human thinking about God. It has been brought to clear expression, however, in the symposium.

My own personal view is that what is known as Christian Theism is about the only final resting place for the human mind in its search for God. Every line of human thought and activity and desire must culminate in belief in a personal being who loves man and who desires to help him. Otherwise the whole of human life is a mere show and futile in its outlook upon the future. Man's fundamental instincts of thought, emotion, morals and religion lead him inevitably to such a being.

I should say, therefore, that the significance of the symposium is in its illustration of the inconclusiveness of all other conceptions of God and in the ineffectiveness of the view that God is not a person who loves man and desires to please him.

Cordially and sincerely yours,

E. Y. MULLINS.

*Southern Baptist Theological Seminary,*
*Louisville, Kentucky.*

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# Correspondence

### Professor Nagarkar, of India

Editor of UNITY:

I wonder how many readers of UNITY remember the four distinguished representatives of India who attended the great Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, and attracted so much attention by their able addresses there. One of the four was Swami Vivakananda, who represented orthodox Hinduism; another was the Buddhist, Mr. H. Dharmapala; the other two were Rev. P. C. Mozoomdar and Professor B. B. Nagarkar, both of whom represented the interesting religious reform movement in India known as the Brahmo Somaj.

All of these eminent men remained in this country many months after the close of the Parliament, and lectured extensively both in the West and in the East, and generally to large and deeply interested audiences. The two who were perhaps the most brilliant and popular lecturers and whose names therefore were most conspicuous in the public press were Swami Vivakananda and Mr. Mozoomdar; but the one who gave to his American audiences the most knowledge of India, her history, her civilization, her religions, the great place she has filled in the world, and especially the great movements of progress and reform, intellectual, social, religious and political, which are stirring in India, was Professor Nagarkar. Indeed, it is doubtful whether any other representative of India has ever come to this country and given us so large an amount of valuable, truthworthy and interesting information about that great historical country, its people, its thought, its hopes and its ideals as did this teacher and scholar, not only during his first visit and lecture tour here in connection with the great Religious Parliament, but in an extended visit made to this country several years later.

Mr. Mozoomdar and Swami Vivakananda died some years ago. Professor Nagarkar lived and did an important work in two or three large Indian cities as a teacher and reformer, until less than a year ago, when he too passed away.

I am writing this article particularly to inform any who remember Mr. Nagarkar's fine work in this country and who formed his friendship, that, notwithstanding his active and very useful life, at his death, to his great sorrow, he was obliged to leave his family in straitened circumstances. Mrs. Nagarkar has frail health, and there are four children of school age, all of them of exceptional promise, who should be kept in school, but who cannot be, without aid from outside. Friends in India are doing what they can; but India is very, very poor. Are there not friends of Professor Nagarkar in America, this country where there is so much wealth and comfort, who would be glad to show their esteem for him by helping his wife in her need, and by

## The Field

*"The world is my country, to do good is my Religion."*

### INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP OF RECONCILIATION

**International.** — *An International Committee of the Historical Sciences,* representing 22 countries, has recently been formed, for the promotion of large-scale international co-operation between historical scholars. The secretary's office is in Paris, and the headquarters of the organization in Washington, U. S. A.

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**Belgium.**—*An International Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism* was held in Brussels, February 10-12. Representatives of the Kuo-Min-Tang, the Indian National Congress, the Egyptian Nationalist Movement, the Mexican and democratic movements of Latin America, the Negro and Syrian peoples, and other subject races were present, as well as representatives of anti-Imperialist parties from the colonial states. It is reported that a feature of the Congress was the impression made on the nationalities of the need for economic liberty, *within their own nation,* as well as freedom from imperialist exploitation from outside. (See address of French Section: Ligue Contre l'Oppression Coloniale, under "France.") *The Fellowship of Reconciliation* in Brussels arranged a public meeting on February 13, for justice and equality between races, and international reconciliation. There were well-known speakers from France, Germany, U. S. A., China, Korea, Africa, etc., and an enthusiastic audience of 200 were present.

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**Estonia.**—In spite of the prevailing nationalist outlook, largely due to fear of Bolshevist Russia, individual voices are raised on behalf of radical pacifism. In the autumn, there occurred a case of conscientious objection to military service. An ex-non-commissioned officer, who had been promoted for his exemplary service in the "War of Liberation" and was a tinker in private life, came into touch with a religious circle through his marriage, and was so influenced that, at the time of the great autumn maneuvers, he appeared in answer to the calling-up notice, but refused to carry a rifle. Warned that he would be punished, he remained true to his resolution. Before the court he said: "I have always been ready to serve. But on ground of religion and conscience I shall kill no more, nor carry weapons of murder." He received the minimum sentence, one and a half year's imprisonment.

* * *

**France.**—*A League against Colonial Oppression* was formed at the end of January in Paris, with the object of protesting against the abuses of colonial administration, denouncing the crimes of governments and individuals in exploiting native races, and protesting in every way against the imperialism of European nations. M. Siating, delegate of the Kuo-Min-Tang, gave an account of the situation in China, and the meeting decided to inform the government of the feeling which was being aroused by rumors of French intervention. It was also decided to send a delegation to the International Congress against Colonial Oppression, to be held in Brussels, in February. A Committee, with H. Barbusse as President, and Mme. Duchêne and M. Félicien Challaye as vice-presidents, was elected to draw up a constitution for the League, whose secretary is: Jacques Vertajour, 3 rue Parmentier, Neuilly sur Seine.

*A French Committee of European Co-operation* has recently been formed for the purpose of studying all questions of European co-operation in the spirit of the League of Nations. Fifty senators, nearly 100 deputies and numerous other personalities, have already joined the Committee. At the first meeting, held in the Chamber of Deputies, it was decided to collaborate with similar organizations, such as the Pan-European Movement and the *Federation for European Understanding* (Fédération pour l'Entente européenne) whose central committee has just been established in Paris under the presidency of M. Emile Borel, ex-minister. Twenty-six nations have already joined this Federation, which has decided to hold a European Congress in 1927 in Germany.

* * *

**Germany.**—*"Nationalist Internationalists."*—An interesting development of the French movement, "Droite Nouvelle," recently inaugurated by Baron Fabre-Luce, is the formation of a German branch in Berlin, led by Professor Martin Spahn and Professor Hoetsch, two German nationalists. As the "Menscheit" suggests, this development may indicate the beginning of a new orientation on the part of German nationalists, who not only welcome the anti-Bolshevist tendency of the "Droite Nouvelle," and its leader's attack on the Versailles Treaty, but desire that a generous international outlook should not be only associated with the left wing parties. That the more conservative elements in the country should come to recognize the inevitable organization of society on international lines, is at any rate, all to the good.

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aiding these children to gain the education which they earnestly desire and which is so very important?

Any such persons may send funds, in whatever amounts, to Mr. A. B. Ruhl, care of the Nelson Knitting Company, Rockford, Illinois. Further information, if desired, may be obtained from Mr. Ruhl.

J. T. SUNDERLAND.

*Poughkeepsie, N. Y.*

### Caviar to the General!

Editor of UNITY:

Major-General Charles P. Summerall, commander of the Eastern Division of the United States Army, is quoted in a press dispatch as charging, in an address before a woman's club here, that "pacifists are using religion as a shield for their activities." "It is up to you women," he is quoted as saying, "to inquire into the policies of your churches and to examine the doctrines taught in the schools which are adverse to good citizenship. You must oppose them from the inside." Does he mean Evolution, or is he condemning the exercise of civic liberty and intelligent vigilance against the encroachments of militarism and other superstitions dangerous and costly?

His words suggest that the high command of the Army looks to the women to do its "boring from within." The full significance of his remarks will not escape those old enough to remember the dismal success with which the Department of Justice and ubiquitous local and state "councils of defense" employed and traduced women by thousands, during the late war, in the most mischievous and contemptible sapping and mining and espionage of their fellow-citizens who were suspected of "disloyalty" because they held and occasionally expressed dissenting opinions and protesting convictions concerning the necessity or righteousness of the holocaust. In many cases this activity resulted in the disruption of social and civilized life, in the demoralizing and bedevilling of families, friends, office-staffs, clubs, entire neighborhoods—an extravaganza of patriotic busyness from whose baleful consequences our suburban communities and social life in the United States have not even yet fully recovered. Remembering how effectively women were mobilized and deployed to this kind of invidious corruption of the tenuous social fabric throughout the country, we should like to suggest that some of them hasten, in the present lucid interval between major wars, to organize and swear in a league for the prevention of *patriotage* and for enforcement of the ninth Commandment.

As for the General, his utterance would seem to be but one more example of the Army's low visibility and of "caviar to the general." Why does it not occur to him that pacifists and other advocates of disestablishment and abolition of the legalized and sanctified War System of periodic blood-sacrifice to tribal gods upon the altars of patriotism may be using their activities as a shield for their religion? Of course, the General is for religion. But if religion be not fortified by valiant *deeds* in the service of embattled spiritual and intellectual truth, surely he must realize that it will decline and perish, as some declare it has already declined, under the unremitting impact of religious *rhetoric* and the soporific, subsidized heresy of materialist patriotism. The issue, indeed, is growing plainer to the younger generation with the passage of disillusionment and the passages of the generals. It is not Communism versus Capitalism in the United States—not yet. And if the generals do not prevail, it may never come to that. It is rather a competition, on an epic scale, between professional Patriotism, Churchianity and dogmatic Radicalism upon the one hand pointing towards force and the mobilization of bigger and better force, *versus* native, rational love of country, and creative love of liberty, of truth, of justice and humanity as personified in the noblest human beings that have ever trodden the aching earth and breathed the poetry of immortality.

BRENT DOW ALLINSON.

*New York City.*

**Great Britain.**—*British opinion and the Chinese crisis.*—One can clearly distinguish three currents of opinion, the one small but very vocal, which believes in force by which to impose British conditions on the Cantonese Government and on "teaching the Chinese a good lesson." Another, possibly larger, calls for the return of the Shanghai expeditionary force and does not think that there is any case for military intervention. Most people, however, believe in the sincerity of the Government's peaceful attitude and are anxious to avoid war, but are also anxious to do whatever is necessary for the defence of British lives which may be endangered by Chinese civil wars. Many of these people would probably add that the military preparations of the Government and particularly the publicity and the display given to these have been in excess of the need and have brought, in China, an irritation which largely destroyed the good effect brought by the conciliatory attitude of our diplomacy.

Meetings representing both this moderate and the more extreme attitude have been held in London and other parts of the country. The Labor Party organized two great demonstrations, one at the Albert Hall and the other in Trafalgar Square, each bringing together many thousands. At both these meetings, resolutions were carried demanding the recall of the troops and the immediate granting of complete sovereignty to the Southern Government, as now representing China; at the latter gathering the resolution included a pledge against war service. Another meeting, arranged by the National Council for Prevention of War, urged the placing of the Chinese question before the League of Nations. It is quite clear that the bulk of public opinion believes in the justice of China's claims to complete independence, is behind the Government in its endeavors to avoid war, and would support a generous settlement of the whole situation. At the same time, there is no saying what effects riots in China and the loss of British lives in any disturbance would have on the great mass of the people, who have not yet realized the limitations of force as a protection and have only a limited belief in the powers of reconciliation and good will.

* * *

**Japan.** — "International Gleanings from Japan" contains interesting articles on present political tendencies. Since the suffrage was granted last year to all male citizens over 25, the existing parties have been hard at work to extend their influence among the masses, while new parties have been rapidly springing up. The latter largely focus the political and economic dissatisfaction of the proletarian elements of the nation. The proletarian movement of Japan like that of Great Britain, has been originated by those who have been actuated by spiritual and humanitarian motives, supported by students of politics and social sciences.

It is of interest to note that the now retired Japanese Admiral Kabayama, recently advocated in *The Japan Times* the complete abolition of capital ships and submarines, the limitation of other war vessels, and the abolition of the air forces.

* * *

**Latvia.**—On February 7, Latvia and Estonia signed a treaty for the economic and customs union of the two republics. Citizens of both states are put on an equal footing in both territories, as regards the right to wage labor, taxes, and possession for use of real estate. There is provision for traffic facilities, exchange of archives and unification of the statistics system; and customs between the two states are to be abolished. Disputes about the application of the Treaty are to be referred to a mixed, if necessary neutral, court of arbitration. A mixed commission has been set up, for a year, to work out a more detailed basis of the union. The Lettish Foreign Minister points out that the Treaty is merely the preliminary to the hard work which lies ahead, but there seems to be a serious desire on the part of both Governments to carry out the necessary changes.

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